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Cambodia: Phnom Penh has agreed to Hanoi's request for talks aimed at improving relations.

The proposal for talks, contained in an official North Vietnamese protest against recent anti-Vietnamese actions, was delivered to the Cambodian Government on 14 March. The protest was noteworthy for its conciliatory tone and dwelled on the importance of maintaining friendly relations. The government will meet with the North Vietnamese chargé in Phnom Penh on 16 March, pending the arrival of an official representative from Hanoi. It is not yet clear if the representative will be Hanoi's ambassador to Cambodia or a special emissary.

The Communists probably view such talks as a useful first step in helping stabilize the situation. They probably do not expect to gain much from them, however, until Sihanouk can participate, and are likely to prolong the talks until he returns to Cambodia later in the week.

Meanwhile, the Cambodians have taken no significant military action following the expiration of their 15 March deadline for the withdrawal of Communist troops.



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[South Vietnam: South Vietnamese Army (ARVN) sweep operations touched off stiff fighting at opposite ends of the country over the weekend.

In several sharp engagements in the U Minh Forest, a long-time Communist stronghold in the southern delta, government regulars killed 127 enemy troops while losing 30 killed and 88 wounded. Elements of two enemy main force regiments, the 273rd and D-1, are believed to have been involved in the clashes.

Meanwhile, near the Demilitarized Zone, ARVN infantrymen attacked elements of the North Vietnamese 27th Regiment entrenched in fortified positions less than three miles from the allied combat base at the "Rockpile." Fifty-five Communists were reportedly killed, while no South Vietnamese losses were reported.

Except for several terrorist incidents in Saigon and a flurry of mortar and rocket attacks in the upper delta, Communist forces maintained a generally low profile throughout most of the country during the weekend.

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Brazil: [The terrorists released the Japanese consul general yesterday after the government had flown the five prisoners into exile.]

The prisoners, whose release had been demanded by the Popular Revolutionary Vanguard (VPR) terrorist group, arrived in Mexico yesterday aboard a special commercial Brazilian airliner. Three admitted to reporters that they had worked with urban terrorist groups in Sao Paulo, two of them with the VPR. One of this pair was involved in the killing of US Army Captain Charles Chandler in October 1968. The fourth prisoner is a Catholic nun accused of assisting terrorists. The other female prisoner, accompanied by three children, is the widow of a VPR activist killed in a gun battle with police last month.

There was substantial dissatisfaction among lower-level military officers about the government's exchange of 15 prisoners for US Ambassador Elbrick last September, and the new episode is likely to provoke similar unhappiness. The fact that four of the new group have claimed in Mexico that they had been tortured after arrest may increase security officials' resentment of the government's release of the prisoners.

The assertion of one prisoner that the kidnaping of foreign diplomats is a legitimate way of rescuing comrades who face long prison terms is likely to lend substance to the fear of military and police officials that the kidnapers' success will lead to further such incidents. The dean of the consular corps in Sao Paulo has requested special protection for foreign diplomatic personnel there.

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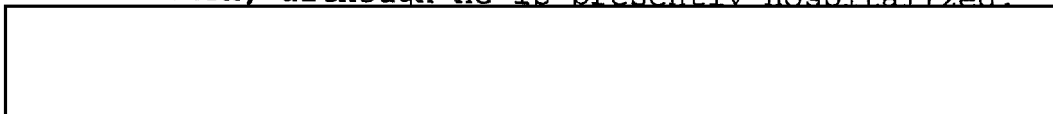
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Southern Yemen: The radical regime, claiming to have uncovered a plot, has arrested a large number of followers of former president Qahtan al Shaabi.

The ruling clique of the National Front party has been arresting its opponents for some time, including followers of Shaabi as well as members of the conservative Muslim Brotherhood and others considered undesirable by the regime. The intensification of the arrest campaign, however, ostensibly stems from discovery of an intended coup, although there is no evidence that it got off the ground. The eight persons executed yesterday may have been implicated in the alleged plot.

The opponents of the ruling group are many, and in some provincial areas there has been a breakdown of public security. The groups which could force change, however, including the army and the internal security forces, remain either neutral or under control of those members of the National Front currently in power. Abd al-Fattah Ismail, the party's strongman, appears to retain control of the situation, although he is presently hospitalized.



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UN: The special session of the governing council of the UN Development Program (UNDP) that opens today may have an important bearing on the future course of the UN technical assistance effort.

The focus of the meeting will be the Jackson report, the recently completed and often critical UN study of current aid operations. The report claims that 20 percent of the assistance projects in the current \$200-million annual effort are "deadwood," sustained in many cases by the "salesmanship" of various UN agencies responsible for their management. It calls for a thorough revamping and strengthening of the UNDP so that it can participate more effectively in achieving the UN goal of doubling technical aid within five years.

Most of the developed countries that have been major contributors of UNDP funds favor the report's recommendations. Some have indicated that failure to implement its findings could lead them to put greater emphasis on bilateral aid or to channel funds through other multilateral agencies.

Several of the less developed countries, however, see the recommendations as a plot by the major donors to increase their influence within the UNDP. Others fear that the criticism of the UNDP may provide an excuse for a general decrease in assistance granted through the UN. Moreover, some elements in the UN secretariat have taken a highly defensive attitude toward the UNDP's past performance and may seek to thwart any moves by the governing council to adopt the Jackson report's recommendations.

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Cyprus: The apparent assassination yesterday of former interior minister Georkatzis will widen the division of the Greek Cypriot community into pro- and anti-Makarios factions. Georkatzis had been linked with the attempted assassination of President Makarios on 8 March, but maintained his innocence. Although not arrested, he was fined for possession of weapons and was prevented from leaving the country last Thursday. Georkatzis' well-armed and devoted followers will probably blame Makarios for these humiliations as well as for the murder and may seek revenge.

* * * *

USSR: Soviet air and ground units concluded large-scale maneuvers in Belorussia on 13 March. Party chief Brezhnev and other top party and military leaders attended the closing parade ceremonies in Minsk on the following day. The Soviet press has billed the exercise, code-named Dvina and directed by Defense Minister Grechko, as the largest ever conducted by Soviet forces. According to the announcements, units from several western military districts were involved, but there is no reliable information on the number of units that participated.

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Austria: Socialist efforts to form a coalition government with the People's Party in the wake of the elections on 1 March have so far been inconclusive. People's Party leaders are not expected to take a position on the Socialists' proposals until tomorrow at the earliest, presumably to allow them to assess their party's showing in yesterday's provincial election in Styria. A coalition between the two parties still seems likely, but

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[redacted] the Socialists will form a minority government if the People's Party proves recalcitrant.

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